

Wednesday
November 29, 1995

At a time when rap is under public scrutiny, Cypress Hill, LL Cool J and Coolio are concentrating on the music



Day Without Art mourns AIDS victims



Stew Milne, THE BATTALION

A black band was placed around the Menos "Paperclip" sculpture to show the devastation caused by AIDS in the art community.

By Rachel Barry
THE BATTALION

Black cloth covers the statues as the disease has covered the nation. For A&M students, today will be a day without art.

The Day Without Art is a collaboration of students and campus and community art institutions to raise awareness of the devastation AIDS has caused in the art community, Sheila Thornton, registrar of the MSC Forsyth Galleries said.

"This is how the art world participates in World AIDS Day," she said. "The purpose is to realize how art and its expression through paint, sculpture, photo, dance and song have enriched our lives and consider what the world would be like without art. Art is a part of our day to day lives whether we realize it or not."

Catherine Hastedt, registrar and curator of the Stark Gallery, said sculptures around campus will either be shrouded with black cloths or will have black ribbons tied around them to catch the attention of students walking to class.

"The idea is to imagine if there were no art because of the losses in the art community," she said. "It is a way to jump start people's awareness."

Erin Hilbun, a member of the planning committee for the Day Without Art and a junior biochemistry major, said she wants students to pay attention to how AIDS affects the art community.

"We want to indicate what the world would be like without art because of the fact that the artistic community has been so hard hit by the disease," Hilbun said.

Amy Day, of the MSC Forsyth Gallery and a graduate business administration student, said the MSC Visual Arts Gallery and the J. Wayne Stark Gallery will be closed today and will display posters in the windows with statistics about the disease in Texas.

"We hope it will increase awareness of the need for people to educate themselves on how to

prevent AIDS," she said, "and also hopefully foster some compassion for the people who have been affected by AIDS."

The MSC Forsyth Gallery will be open and will display panels of the AIDS quilt from three families affected by AIDS in the Brazos Valley. The panels memorialize people who have died of AIDS and are hand-crafted by victims' families.

"Most people are blatantly unaware of how bad the situation with HIV has become," Hilbun said. "This is an effort to get people to stop and think about it."

Hilbun said the effect AIDS has had on the artistic and gay communities has caused them to react.

Day said the artistic community has been vocal in its efforts to prevent the disease.

"It (the artistic community) has been so deeply affected by the AIDS crisis," she said.

"What if there was only one artist left, and he got AIDS? Then there would be no art. How would people feel about that?"

The Center for Disease Control stated AIDS is the number one cause of death for Americans between the ages of 25 and 44.

"The people who need to be concerned are not," Hilbun said. "They are the ones who think they can't get it."

Hilbun said the Day Without Art is a chance to fight AIDS with the last weapon available.

"The point is basically education," she said. "Right now, that is the only way to deal with it. Right now, there is no cure for AIDS. The only way of dealing with the disease is to prevent it. People need to be aware."

The national Day Without Art is Friday. A&M is observing the day today so that its significance is not overshadowed by Bonfire and Elephant Walk.

"We want to make people think about what it would be like if the art wasn't there," Hilbun said. "It's something they are used to and often take for granted. Hopefully, they'll stop and think about why it isn't there."

ALBUM REVIEW
Cypress Hill
Temples of Boom
Ruffhouse / Columbia
★★★ (out of five)

Rising from the ashes of this summer's Lollapalooza festival comes an album with a distinctive smell. Yes, the nasal whine of Cypress Hill is back, and ...

What's this? Oh my goodness, Cypress Hill made an album about marijuana! Unbelievable, I know, that wholesome young men like the boys from Cypress Hill would make an album advocating the use of an illegal substance. Stunning, just stunning.

On the third installment of the Cypress Hill saga, *Temples of Boom*, B-Real and Sen Dog pick up where they left off with 1993's *Black Sunday*.

That's the problem. Blunts, blunts and more blunts litter each joint, oops, I mean song. But there's nothing shocking in the marijuana-laced rhymes of, though for "Spark Another Owl," "Stoned Raiders," "Illusions" and "Everybody Must Get Stoned." B-Real has to be running out of methods of preaching the herb.

Musically, *Temples of Boom* is one of the year's strongest. DJ Muggs' production is exquisite, drawing upon Middle Eastern sounds and chants to create an air of mystery ... and marijuana.

The most intriguing song on the album is "No Rest For the Wicked," a surprising scathing dismissal of gangsta rapper Ice Cube. In the same vein as famous rap battles between Kool Moe Dee and LL Cool J, Eazy E and Dr. Dre and Kid versus Play (joke), B-Real rips into Cube's music and movies with a startling vengeance.

What the group has failed to tap into is the rhyme skills of Sen Dog. Constantly playing second fiddle to B-Real, Dog's gruff voice is a welcome change of pace to B-Real's monotonous drone.

I suppose expecting anything but the contents of *Temples of Boom* would be asking too much from Cypress Hill. The beats still boom and the songs will still get any crowd moving.

B-Real and Sen Dog can sit back now and watch fans eat the album up like a junkie with the munchies.

ALBUM REVIEW
LL Cool J
Mr. Smith
Def Jam Records
★ 1/2 (out of five)

It's always a shame to watch musical giants fall from their positions of grandeur.

Of course, it's easier to make fun of them when they do ... but I digress.

Michael Jackson will never have another *Thriller*. Madonna will never recapture the nation's attention as she did with *Like a Virgin*. And the artist formerly known as Prince will never shower the charts as he did with *Purple Rain*.

Despite rap's relatively new status as a musical force, it is by no means immune from this tragedy. As recent as last year, Public Enemy went from rap's kings to mere pawns.

And has anyone heard from Kurtis Blow or Kool Moe Dee lately?

Next up for this dubious honor is LL Cool J.

"Ladies Love Cool James" was one of rap's first heroes with the bravado-boasting "Radio" and "I'm Bad." But even more impressive was his landmark *Mama Said Knock You Out*, complete with a knockout performance on *MTV Unplugged*.

Times have changed. *Mr. Smith* is a pitiful excuse for an album. It sounds like LL wanted something to do between takes of his NBC sitcom *In The House*, and this was the best he could do.

It seems the formula created by the rub-a-dub love of his hit "I Need Love" is what is on Cool J's mind. LL is no Barry White, yet he does his best to convince the audience that he is Mr. Loverman. Almost every song is on a mid-tempo vibe, missing the power of "Mama Said Knock You Out" or the humor of "Jinglin' Baby" or "Boomin' System."

The bravado is still there, but what does it matter if it isn't backed up by anything of substance? Trying to be hard ("I Shot Ya") and violent ("Life As...") is difficult when you star on a TV sitcom with Debbie Allen.

It's a good thing Cool J has *In The House* on television, because he couldn't be further from the house when it comes to rap.

ALBUM REVIEW
Coolio
Gangsta's Paradise
Tommy Boy
★★★ 1/2 (out of five)

Not since the baggy-ass pants days of M.C. Hammer has the music industry been so enthralled with a rapper.

But Coolio's emergence as rap's next spotlight grabber has done more than create a fascination with gravity-defying hair. He has become the latest crossover phenomenon, accessible to both the pop and rap charts.

With the release of *Gangsta's Paradise*, Coolio provides the reason why. By combining the west-coast gangsta sound with socially responsible lyrics, he has found the commercial and artistic balance between Ice Cube and Skee-Lo.

No blood and guts, but no sell out.

The only problem with *Gangsta's Paradise* is that it aims a bit too high. With Public Enemy essentially gone, Coolio is attempting to become the conscience of rap by policing the gangstas and dismissing the popsters.

The album is a blow-by-blow description of problems in the ghettos. Beginning with the newscast-like "Geto Highlites," Coolio then tackles inner-city hopelessness ("Gangsta's Paradise"), AIDS and safe sex ("Too Hot"), alcohol abuse ("Kinda High, Kinda Drunk") and women's rights ("For My Sistaz").

Admirable intentions indeed, but the ambitious formula soon becomes obvious and takes away from the fun of Coolio's style. The sheer enjoyment of tracks like "Fantastic Voyage" and "I Remember" from Coolio's debut, *It Takes a Thief*, seem to be thrown under the speeding socially-conscious train of *Gangsta's Paradise*.

There are a few flashes of brilliance, as in the title track and "Bumpin' New," which recalls the early days when hip hop was primarily party fun. And the "Papa don't take no mess" theme of "Smilin'" is as much of a family lesson as it is silly.

Gangsta's Paradise is a definite step in an important direction for Coolio as he takes his place among rap's elite. Let's just hope he doesn't take himself too seriously and lose what made him interesting in the first place.

ELEPHANT WALK 1995

Class of '96 Events

- * Beginning Yell at Kyle Field 96 Minutes after Noon
- * Guest Speaker: Former Yell Leader Chuck Hinton '76
- * STEP OFF!!
- * End at Bonfire with 15 for Team
- * Pictures with a Live Elephant
- * Party at Hurricane Harry's at 8 p.m.
- * Help Feed 96 Families

CLASS OF '99

GENERAL CLASS MEETING

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30

7:00 P.M.

111 KOLDUS

* APPLICATIONS FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS WILL BE AVAILABLE.